8   Feminism and the figure of Man

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This chapter explores the early work of two feminist thinkers in International Relations (IR): Ann Tickner and Christine Sylvester. Both were centrally concerned with embodying the figure of Man and elaborating what this would mean for IR ontologically and epistemologically. The chapter introduces Evelyn Fox Keller's image of an internal balance of masculine and feminine principles in the development of human selves as the interpretive matrix of Tickner's early work, and it traces Sylvester's starting point in the Anglo-Saxon adaptation of Lacanian theory, seeking a middle ground between the denial of woman's existence on the one hand and the search for an authentic woman on the other. Following Keller, Tickner replaces abstract Man with unstable subjectivities negotiating their masculine and feminine sides and pleads for a valuing of the feminine in IR. Following Butler and others, Sylvester juxtaposes to abstract Man fragmented, de-centered, mobile, and multiple "women" moving between unstable homesteads. The chapter shows the limits of starting from Man for feminist IR and concludes with an endorsement of feminist approaches that locate gender and agency at all levels of analysis and of epistemologies that look beyond the individual researcher.

The figure of Man is foundational to the field of International Relations.[1] Imagined as fearful, equal, heroic, tragic, virtuous, rational, or social, it informs theories from realism to liberalism and from rationalism to

[1] The meanings of man and woman are of course highly contested in feminist theory, and authors express the different shades of meaning through capitalization, quotation marks, singularization, and pluralization. In this chapter, I follow the following convention: "Man," capitalized and in the singular refers to the abstract idea of a disembodied human being that has dominated Western thought in the modern era. "Woman," capitalized and in the singular, refers to the idea of an abstract authentic femininity. Otherwise I follow the conventions of the authors I am discussing. Thus, Tickner writes about women and men without problematizing these terms diacritically; in contrast, Sylvester always puts "women" in quotation marks.

constructivism. Man in these imaginings is rarely theorized as masculine; instead he is made to stand in for the human. Lacking a body, he is an abstract figure that has transcended the profanities of everyday life. He is all mind, reason, action, aspiration, and striving. But what if "man" had a body? And what if this body mattered to what it means to be human, and to international politics? Feminists have raised these questions, pointing out that the figure of disembodied man dressed up as human produces distorted realities and hides the power politics necessary to keep others at bay.

For feminists in International Relations, the question of man is as much a matter of epistemology as of ontology. They ask not only how the theories and practices of international relations would change, but also how we would know differently, if we embodied man. Both questions raise the problematic issue of how to theorize an embodied human being. If we think of abstract man as masculine, are there then multiple forms of humanity? If we theorize masculine man as a stable presence, an interested actor, and a positive knower, then who is de-masculinized man? Is he an androgynous figure purged of biases and distortions? Or is he a she, woman, a nature apart and different? If de-masculinized man is a woman, are there then two types of being human, and only two, who act and know differently? But perhaps man can never be woman, perhaps de-masculinized man merely is derivative of abstract man? "Is there woman, really?" Christine Sylvester asks with Simone de Beauvoir, moving on to suspend her into quotation marks.[2] Thus suspended, can she ever strategize, negotiate, or know?

This chapter engages with the work of two key theorists at the beginnings of feminist International Relations in the 1990s, J. Ann Tickner and Christine Sylvester, in order to illustrate distinctive feminist contributions to an International Political Anthropology. Writing in a different context of disciplinary politics, they would not frame their work in these terms, and indeed, today both have moved beyond these early debates. But their arguments about Man and "women" continue to resonate in their work and in feminist IR more broadly. They can be considered emblematic poles in a debate that has fueled feminist contentions around the meaning of woman, man, agency, and identity. Tickner has been labeled (by Sylvester and others) a standpoint feminist,[3] who has held on to the idea of originary gendered agents and with it to the idea of a

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[2] Christine Sylvester, *Feminist International Relations: An Unfinished Journey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 246.
[3] Ibid., p. 42.

women's way of knowing.[4] In contrast, Sylvester is a self-identified post-modern feminist, who has sought to destabilize the category "women." In other words, for Tickner embodying Man has meant bringing into view the other human, women, whereas for Sylvester it has meant calling into question the entire edifice of stable identities. In this chapter I do not repeat the well-rehearsed arguments about standpoint and postmodern epistemologies. Instead, I disentangle the ontological claims about human nature, the meanings of Man and women, that underlie these arguments, tease out the effects of their deployment for International Relations as a field of knowledge and practice, and gauge the implications that a problematization of subjectivity has had for feminist IR. The chapter begins with a discussion of these matters in Tickner's work, followed by an engagement with Sylvester. In each section I first explore the notions of human nature in the authors' early writings, what Jacobi and Freyberg-Inan in the Introduction call "interpretive matrixes" that inform the writings of scholars. This is followed by a discussion of how these matrixes matter for IR. I conclude by pointing to the shortcomings of treating gender as attached only to individuals, and suggest that the strength of feminist approaches lies in showing the significance of gendered agency at all levels of analysis.

Ann Tickner and the project of balancing human nature

The Man of IR has figured centrally in Tickner's investigations, starting from her exploration of Hans Morgenthau's principles of realism and on to her later work on feminist epistemology and methodology. Her agenda has consisted in revealing the masculine undertones of IR theory and practice, but she has moved further, also offering reconstructions. We encounter in Tickner elements of a new figure not of Man or human nature in the singular, but of gendered humans – women and men – in the plural. And she expressly derives from these figures a new type of politics.

Tickner's critiques juxtapose feminist literature – on violence, war, development – to the IR canon that has for the most part ignored such writings. The effect is often jarring, introducing themes that do not seem "naturally" to belong to IR and thus making visible vast gendered

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[4] Like most feminists, Tickner problematizes the liberal idea of preexisting actors with always already formed interests. Instead she recognizes that agents are socially constructed and importantly produced as gendered. Yet, she does retain a notion of subjective intentionality and thus of the human subject as originating agency. See also the discussion of agency in the Introduction to this volume.

silences. Politically effective, the structure of her critique is binary, opposing feminism to the mainstream, feminist ways of knowing, being and doing to masculinist ways of knowing, being and doing. For example, Tickner critiques Morgenthau's six principles of political realism for privileging masculine characteristics over more feminine-identified ones – such as conflict over cooperation – and for separating masculine-identified politics from feminine-identified morality. This approach has invited critics to suggest that Tickner fails to problematize the categories woman and man and instead accepts women "as a commonplace around which there would be little reason to pose an identity problematic."[5] Tickner has moved beyond the approach she took in this early work and has embraced concepts that disrupt dichotomous thinking. But, I would suggest, even in her early work Tickner's theoretical starting point was more complicated than her critics have suggested. Even then, Tickner's women and men were not pre-given essences, but psychosocial beings struggling to find balance.

Gendered human nature and childhood development

Tickner's early work betrays a thoroughly constructivist understanding of gender. Although she does not shun the labels "man" and "woman," she emphasizes the necessity to think about the constructed characteristics that attach to them – masculinities and femininities and, following R.W. Connell (1987), in particular the "hegemonic masculinities" that are culturally dominant and influential in IR. But, most importantly, Tickner owes a large debt to psychoanalytical theory, in particular Evelyn Fox Keller's work on the intersections of science and gender, which she cites extensively.[6] Keller explores what she calls the "ideology of science," suggesting that science is a male endeavor thriving on masculine virtues, regarded as unfit for women and incompatible with feminine qualities. She combines literary techniques to interpret the writings of philosophers from Plato to Bacon with psychoanalytic approaches that allow her insight into the way male and female scientists differently relate to their objects of knowledge. It is this latter approach that has particularly influenced Tickner's understanding of what it means to be a gendered human being.

Keller's starting point is the mythical construction of objectivity, reason, and mind as male and the complementary association of subjectivity,

[5] Ibid., p. 42.
[6] Evelyn Fox Keller, *Reflections on Gender and Science*, 10th anniversary edition (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995).

feeling, and nature as female. Scientific ideology separates the knower (i.e., the mind) from that which is knowable (i.e., nature); indeed, in imagining the relationship between the knower and the object of knowledge scientists have followed gendered scripts of courtship and domination. Object relations theory provides Keller the basis for arguing a link between masculinity and an approach to knowledge that separates knower and known, subject and object, and makes possible a kind of gendered epistemic violence epitomized in Bacon's metaphor of nature as the bride that needs to be tamed, shaped, subdued, and ultimately violated in order to be conquered.[7]

The contribution of object relations theorists lies in recognizing the central role that mothers play in child development. The mother appears as the first object to the child; by regarding her, the child painfully realizes her or his own, separate existence. In a conflicted process, the child gains pleasure from her or his growing autonomy while yearning to re-establish the original unity.[8] For the child in Western cultures, the mother comes to symbolize the dream of unity but also the threat of dissolved boundaries; in contrast, the father comes to stand for autonomy, "for individuation and differentiation – for objective reality itself."[9] It is he who represents the world for the child. Thus, both girls and boys end up associating "the affective and cognitive posture of objectification with the masculine, while all processes that involve a blurring of the boundary between subject and object tend to be associated with the feminine."[10] Keller follows Nancy Chodorow in recognizing that this association entails a denigration of the mother.[11]

To the extent that boys see a need to establish an identity that is opposite to the feminine, processes of separation will be particularly prominent in their psychosocial development, and it will be more typical for men than women to be preoccupied with autonomy. In contrast, girls identifying with their mothers will have difficulty developing a sense of separateness. Keller questions whether there is an end point of child development, a stage where normal adult maturity can be said to have been accomplished. She rejects the notion of a static form of autonomy as the highest stage of emotional development and argues instead that the tension between autonomy and intimacy, between separation and connection can never be resolved. Accordingly, mature personalities display "dynamic autonomy," i.e. they are able to achieve a shifting balance between the fears of merging or boundary loss, on the one hand, and

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[7] Ibid., pp. 36–7.   [8] Ibid., p. 81.   [9] Ibid., p. 86.   [10] Ibid., p. 87.
[11] Ibid., p. 106.

the threats of loneliness and disconnection, on the other. This leaves open a space between self and other so that it becomes temporarily possible to suspend the boundaries between me and not-me, a condition that she considers necessary for any experience of empathy.[12]

In a similar vein, Keller pleads for a concept of dynamic rather than static objectivity to inform research practices. She explains that "dynamic objectivity aims at a form of knowledge that grants to the world around us its independent integrity but does so in a way that remains cognizant of, indeed relies on, our connectivity with that world."[13] So, like dynamic autonomy, dynamic objectivity navigates between a sense of oneness with the world while seeking to retain a separate identity from the world. Both modes of being and knowing counteract potentially pathological forms of attachment to autonomy and objectivity that set up relations of domination to their objects of inquiry or take an adversarial stance toward the other or the environment. Instead, these dynamic postures convey an ability to temporarily suspend the boundaries between self and other, subject and object in order to be able to feel empathy, a feeling which Keller surmises is crucial to allowing the "creative leap between knower and known."[14]

What Keller thus describes – and Tickner inherits from her – is an understanding of gendered human nature as structured by processes of childhood development, in which the separation from the mother becomes the central accomplishment, an accomplishment that is, however, never complete. Around the achievement of autonomy, we (women and men) encounter tensions between fears of engulfment, on the one hand, and loneliness, on the other; around the achievement of objectivity we face conflicts between desires to dominate, on the one hand, and to love, on the other. Keller's interpretation of object relations theory informs Tickner's early writings – there are selves with masculine characteristics and selves with feminine characteristics. Yet with Keller, Tickner also recognizes that gender identities are not static: they always involve a balancing act. A static identity tends toward the pathological. The ideal women and men emerging in this discussion remain dynamic, capable of both autonomy and a relaxing of ego boundaries, and striving toward the right balance between detachment and attachment, separation and connection. The figure of man has been replaced by the figure of gendered selves more or less skillfully negotiating their feminine and masculine sides.

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[12] Ibid., p. 99.   [13] Ibid., p. 117.   [14] Ibid., p. 99.

Balanced humans in the study and practice of International Relations

What are the implications of this reformulation of human nature into gendered psychosocial selves for the study and practice of International Relations? Tickner's work can be read as an effort to show that many of the concepts and practices of IR are one-sided or incomplete and need to be rebalanced – adding ways of knowing and doing dismissed as feminine to masculine struggles for autonomy and objectivity.

Tickner is perhaps most faithful to Keller in her reformulation of Morgenthau's six principles, where she specifically brings to bear Keller's agenda of making objectivity and autonomy dynamic, so that they oscillate between connection and separation. She argues that Morgenthau's quest for an objective science of International Relations is informed by the ideology that associates objectivity, reason, and control with a masculine separation of self from other and of subject from object.[15] She goes on to reformulate Morgenthau's first principle, which demands objectivity in the study of international relations, to postulate instead a dynamic objectivity that recognizes human connection to the world around it and would bring to the fore the relational aspects of humanity.

Drawing on Keller's conceptualization of dynamic autonomy, Tickner also reformulates Morgenthau's sixth principle, rejecting the idea that politics could be autonomous from ethics. She suggests that postulating the autonomy of the object to be studied (i.e., politics) and the corollary autonomy of the scholarly subject reflects masculine values of separation. Accordingly she advances the case for worldviews that "rest on a pluralistic conception of human nature,"[16] i.e. worldviews that combine feminine and masculine values, aptitudes, and inclinations. Like Keller, she proposes a new type of understanding of human nature that combines characteristics coded as feminine and masculine, specifying that "human nature is both masculine and feminine." And she translates this into terminology relevant for IR to suggest that human nature "contains elements of social reproduction and development as well as political domination."[17]

Keller's conceptualization of human nature as both feminine and masculine surfaces repeatedly as Tickner reformulates IR concepts. Thus, her rewriting of the state of nature myth injects a woman into the story in order to illustrate that humans not only compete but also want to connect

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[15] J. Ann Tickner, "Hans Morgenthau's Principles of Political Realism: A Feminist Reformulation," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 17 (1988), 429–40.
[16] Tickner, "Hans Morgenthau's Principles," 438.   [17] Ibid., 432.

and cooperate. She offers the example of Sacajawea, the Shoshone wife of a French interpreter on the Lewis and Clark expedition, whose presence served to signal the peaceful intentions of the expedition. Tickner argues that adding women to the state of nature similarly would conjure up images of a human condition that encompass both conflict and cooperation. Introducing again Keller's critique of objectivity, autonomy and control as projecting masculine aspirations, she suggests that "feminist perspectives would . . . assume that striving for attachment is also part of human nature."[18]

A final example of Tickner's application of the idea of balancing human nature emerges in her exploration of images of man in International Political Economy. After critiquing the rational man of economic liberalism and the Prisoner's Dilemma she proposes:

Many women, whose life experiences have been more closely bound to the private sphere of care giving and child rearing, would define rationality as contextual and personal rather than abstract. In their care-giving roles women are engaged in activities associated with serving others, activities that are rational from the perspective of reproduction rather than production. . . . A feminist redefinition of rationality might therefore include an ethic of care and responsibility.[19]

Again this redefinition seeks balance, but it extends Keller's argument beyond the level of the individual. What need to be balanced are no longer the internal relational tensions that accompany the making of an autonomous self. Instead, the balancing pertains to the different attitudes women and men carry with them as a result of their external life experiences. Like in some versions of standpoint theory, the femininity of the concrete and the masculinity of the abstract follow from gender divisions of labor that immerse women into the contingencies of everyday life while leaving men to transcend quotidian drudgery and reach beyond.

But the application of a new notion of the human to political economy, the recognition that gender attaches not only to the human subject but – via gender divisions of labor – also to the organization of the economy, runs into trouble. Balancing now no longer is confined to individuals but involves institutional and structuring processes of production and reproduction. Object relations theory may enable a deconstruction of the figure of rational man, but beyond suggesting an opposition between a feminine and masculine ethic, lacks the theoretical tools to engender political economy. The category of experience based on gender divisions of labor (which informs Tickner's application of the ethic of care) threatens to

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[18] J. Ann Tickner, *Gender in International Relations: Feminist Perspectives on Achieving Global Security* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), p. 64.
[19] Ibid., p. 91.

erase the subtleties of Keller's concepts. Experience, necessarily complete and past, replaces the dynamic negotiations of autonomy and objectivity and becomes a definer of woman and man. Tickner's solution ultimately is to abandon the starting point in psychology and adopt the language of gender divisions of labor and gendered states. However, might it be possible to make Tickner's dynamic embodiments of the figure of Man useful for a broader theory of international society? Might it be possible to see the dynamic negotiations of feminine and masculine principles as enmeshed in agency at multiple levels of analysis, in processes of production, reproduction, and power balancing?[20] Tickner has prepared a theoretical ground and hinted at the relevance of theoretical instruments developed with the concept of an ethic of care. The potential of this approach for a theory of international society remains to be realized.[21]

Christine Sylvester and the de-centering of human nature

Tickner's work directs us toward the gap between the self and the other, the balancing act that embodied human beings face as they seek to negotiate the gendered dualism between separation and connection in their psychosocial development. Christine Sylvester has a significantly different understanding of the human condition and of the condition of women in particular. Where Tickner's starting point is a human subject no longer identical with her or his autonomous self, Sylvester starts from a postmodern world in which de-centered human subjects struggle to develop an identity and to anchor themselves at least fleetingly in temporary homesteads. Where Tickner asks the question of Man, Sylvester starts from the problem of "women" and strains to locate them in a

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[20] See Jacobi and Freyberg-Inan, this volume; Herborth, this volume.

[21] There is of course an extensive literature on the ethic of care. The classical formulation is Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982). Debates around Gilligan's theory are collected in Mary Jeanne Larrabee (ed.), *An Ethic of Care: Feminist and Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (New York: Routledge, 1993) and Virginia Held (ed.), *Justice and Care: Essential Readings in Feminist Ethics* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995). For an application in Political Science see Joan C. Tronto, "Beyond Gender Difference to a Theory of Care," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 12/4 (1987), 644–63. For an application to International Relations see Fiona Robinson, *Globalizing Care: Ethics, Feminist Theory and International Relations* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999). Laura Sjoberg connects Keller's notion of relational autonomy with Sylvester's notion of empathetic cooperation and makes Keller's interpretive matrix relevant for the conduct of war. See her *Gender, Justice, and the Wars in Iraq: A Feminist Reformulation of Just War Theory* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2006).

de-centered and disorienting world of multiple and intersecting differences.

Sylvester does not draw on psychoanalytic theory explicitly. However, her effort to locate "women" is informed by the diverse appropriations in Anglo-American feminist scholarship of the writings of "French" feminist theorists such as Julia Kristeva and Luce Irigaray, who have developed Lacanian psychoanalysis in a feminist direction.[22] Ambiguously situated in these appropriations, Sylvester navigates the shoals of valuing the feminine, on the one hand, and of dismissing it as a mere effect of Man, on the other. Plotting her course, she is guided by a dislike for both the extreme of an essentialist reading of an authentic figure of Woman and that of unveiling Woman as nonexistent. She tries to steer a middle path that allows her to preserve women as agents while doing away with the totalizing figure of Woman. I will first outline the polarities of feminist debates that provide the parameters of Sylvester's identity problematique in order to then consider the way in which Sylvester makes her new figuration of "women" relevant for international relations – most importantly in the form of a method of research and a way of being that she calls "empathetic cooperation."

Mobile subjects and the effects of language

Unlike object relations theory, which describes gender development as a social relation, Kristeva and Irigaray consider such development to be located in the relationship between a pre-oedipal, "semiotic" phase that is the deposit of "the unspoken, repressed foundation of signification" and a symbolic order, i.e. the social world, "the order of law, language and regulated exchange."[23] In order to enter the post-oedipal symbolic order of language and culture, the child has to renounce the immediate pleasures and gratifications it demands in the pre-oedipal phase. The semiotic is associated with the feminine and maternal, and characterized by "the energetic, rhythmic, bodily contributions of the pre- or anti-social individual – libido and unharnessed bodily energies." In contrast, the symbolic order is the "law of the Father." Development requires that the child enter this "singular, regulated order of phallic sexuality" replacing

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[22] I put French in quotation marks because, while both Kristeva and Irigaray publish in France, the first is of Bulgarian origin and the second is Belgian. Key influences that Sylvester cites are Judith Butler and Jane Flax.

[23] Elizabeth Gross, "Philosophy, Subjectivity and the Body: Kristeva and Irigaray," in Carole Pateman and E. Gross (eds.), *Feminist Challenges: Social and Political Theory* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1986), pp. 127–8. My summary of Kristeva and Irigaray's thought is based on Gross's discussion.

the libidinal impulses and the feminine, plural *jouissance* of the pre-oedipal phase.[24] The symbolic order thus both presupposes and suppresses the feminine semiotic which, however, according to Kristeva, is capable of reappearing in breaches or ruptures of the symbolic order.

Significantly, sexual difference in the Lacanian story precedes language – the feminine comes before the abstract human being.[25] Yet, ironically, woman ultimately disappears; engulfed by the law of the father, she is the totally other, abject, an ontological impossibility. In Kristeva's words, women "cannot be: the category woman is even that which does not fit into *being*. From there, women's practice can only be negative, in opposition to that which exists, to say that 'this is not' and 'it is not yet.'"[26] But Irigaray refuses this conclusion and makes it her project to narrate woman into existence, to give women subjectivity and an identity. She emphatically criticizes phallocentrism, defined by Gross as

the network of images, representations, methods and procedures for representing women and the feminine in some necessary relation to men and masculinity, a series of presumptions about the representation of one sex from the perspective deemed universal by the other sex.[27]

Against phallocentric images of femininity she seeks to develop a speaking position for women, "a conceptual perspective and discursive space where women can articulate their specific needs, desires and contributions."[28]

In her seminal book *Gender Trouble*, Judith Butler favors the Lacanian approach over object relations theory because it does away with the central figure of the mother and the heterosexist framework that divides genders into masculine and feminine. The equation of the social world with the law of the Father thus offers space to explore gay and lesbian cultures.[29] But Butler is uncomfortable with the image of a symbolic order that is virtually immutable and replaces it with a more sociological understanding of gender construction influenced by the Foucaultian conceptualization of the social as a confluence of discourse and power. In this approach language no longer is purely symbolic but gains semantic content. The symbolic order becomes discourses – in the plural – that produce the regulatory fiction of "woman." Sex thus is no longer pre-figured as a hierarchical binary in the relationship of the semiotic and the

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[24] Ibid., p. 128.
[25] Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender* (New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 208.
[26] Quoted in Gross, "Philosophy, Subjectivity and the Body," p. 133.   [27] Ibid., p. 134.
[28] Ibid., p. 135.
[29] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990), p. 66.

symbolic. Instead identity categories are relational and emerge as "effects of institutions, practices, discourses with multiple points of origin."[30]

The gendered selves thus produced are internally riven. Irigaray concedes as much for women – they are the sex "which is not one."[31] But Butler insists in addition that all identifications are always multiple and coexisting, producing "conflicts, convergences, and innovative dissonances within gender configurations which contest the fixity of masculine and feminine placements with respect to the paternal law."[32] In a sense Butler agrees with Kristeva, "woman" cannot be, at least not as a pre-cultural reification. But in the realm of discourse, Butler does imagine identities called women, identities that however are diverse, always unstable and in the process of becoming. Gender is better thought of as a verb than a noun, a performance embedded in a range of hegemonic prohibitions, but one that is never reproduced faithfully in a repetition of performances.[33]

The questions of how to think of the self and agency have become key preoccupations in light of these theories. Is it still possible to speak of autonomy, responsibility, reflexivity or emancipation in the face of a subject that is an effect of discourse?[34] Butler insists that a problematization of the subject does not do away with agency; indeed it liberates agency to the extent that it no longer is straitjacketed into a particular construction of identity.[35] Lacking an essence, woman becomes a site permanently available for contesting meaning. As feminist scholars have suggested, the multiplicity of women is defined as much by race, class, and other status positions (which are – to different extents – constructions themselves) as by gender, and what it means to be a woman morphs over time.[36] She is not one but many, she is not self-same but mobile and incoherent, she is – in Rosi Braidotti's words – "a heap of fragmented parts."[37] Feminists have advanced a variety of figurations to describe this

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[30] Ibid., p. ix.
[31] Luce Irigaray, "This Sex Which Is Not One," in Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron (eds.), *New French Feminisms: An Anthology* (New York: Schocken Books, 1981), pp. 99–106.
[32] Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p. 67.   [33] Ibid., p. 24.
[34] Linda Nicholson, "Introduction," in Seyla Benhabib, Judith Butler, Drucilla Cornell, and Nancy Fraser, *Feminist Contentions: A Philosophical Exchange* (New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 3.
[35] Judith Butler, "Contingent Foundations: Feminism and the Question of 'Postmodernism'," in Benhabib et al., *Feminist Contentions*, p. 50.
[36] Elizabeth V. Spelman, *Inessential Woman: Problems of Exclusion in Feminist Thought* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1988); Jane Flax, "Postmodernism and Gender Relations in Feminist Theory," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 12/4 (1987), 621–43.
[37] Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), p. 12.

radically de-centered and problematized subject, ranging from the transgressive parodies of transvestites celebrated by Butler to the cyborgs of Donna Haraway and the nomads of Braidotti.[38] Inserting woman into theories of Man thus disrupts not only the hierarchical binary of gender but undermines the very existence of a human subject – at least in its female form.

The fragmentation of the subject carries implications for the feminist political project because it does away with the assumption of a common interest of woman and the idea that she is an agent of history. It also has implications for feminism as an epistemological position.[39] If the subject is de-centered and mobile, how does this subject know? Christine Sylvester has asked this question in the field of International Relations, proposing a new way of being and knowing, which she labels "empathetic cooperation."

Mobile subjects in the study and practice of International Relations

Sylvester's interventions into International Relations in many ways parallel Tickner's agendas. Like her, Sylvester probes the absences of women and the feminine in the IR canon; like her, she seeks to pry open a field oblivious to its own tunnel visions and exclusionary practices, and like her, she seeks a reconstruction of the field that accounts for embodied subjects. But unlike Tickner, she also sees "women" as a veiled presence in IR, one with little weight and difficult to pin down but lurking in the shadows nonetheless. Thus for her the project of revisioning IR is part of a larger project of reimagining agency and ways of knowing that responds to the postmodern reality of the mobile and fragmented subject. Her efforts to locate "women" in IR lead Sylvester to propose two methodologies: "empathetic cooperation" and "world-traveling" – the later incorporating insights from post-colonial feminism.[40] Although there are differences in genealogies, the two methods resonate with each other. Since the notion of empathetic cooperation has been picked up more broadly in feminist IR, I make it the focus of my investigation.

Empathetic cooperation is a method for knowing and a prescription for conduct employed by postmodern mobile subjectivities homeless in the world. It is a method that recognizes that subjects are positional. But unlike in various standpoint approaches, they emerge at the intersections

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[38] Ibid., p. 3.   [39] Flax, "Postmodernism and Gender Relations in Feminist Theory."
[40] The connection is made in Christine Sylvester, "African and Western Feminism: World-Traveling the Tendencies and Possibilities of Author(s)," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 20 (1995), 941–69.

of discursive power, institutions, and regulation. In other words, "women" becomes an identity not because of the female child's relations to the mother as a first object or because of common experiences of labor divisions along the lines of gender, as proposed in various versions of standpoint "theory."[41] Instead, Sylvester searches for a location of "women" in borderlands and liminal sites, places that defy home. She evokes the metaphor of mobility, of people traveling with confining identity baggage (such as motherhood, peace-lovingness, and care) that she suggests might be discarded, but also inspected closely before letting go. Thus she anchors the identity "women" in "places of mobility around policed boundaries, places where one's bag disappears and reappears before moving on."[42] In these borderlands, mobile subjects roam without fixed homesteads. They do not anchor as Woman, an authentic pre-formed essence, but neither are they mere ciphers:

To say that women are a sex class, that women are child-bearers – in body or spirit – that women are oppressed, indeed even that women exist, may be to wear western hand-me-down gender stories as though they were natural. But ... to denaturalize gender must not be tantamount to erasing the gendered (among other things) person standing before you who has one foot in modernity and another in postmodernity.[43]

Thus, Sylvester dances on the border between standpoint and postmodern epistemologies, a border that she suggests "ooze[s] and leak[s]."[44]

Empathetic cooperation, Sylvester proposes, is the method for exploring "politics at borderlands." Like dynamic objectivity, empathetic cooperation enables empathy, an opening up to the other. It "taps the ability and willingness to enter into the feeling or spirit of something and appreciate it fully in a subjectivity-moving way."[45] Both empathetic cooperation and world traveling not only provide access to understanding but also refract back on the self. Here is Sylvester's definition of empathetic cooperation:

It is a process of positional slippage that occurs when one listens seriously to the concerns, fears, and agendas of those one is unaccustomed to heeding ..., taking

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[41] For an overview of standpoint thinking, see Sandra Harding, *The Science Question in Feminism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986); Nancy C. M. Hartsock, *The Feminist Standpoint Revisited and Other Essays* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998); Marysia Zalewski, "Feminist Standpoint Theory Meets International Relations Theory: A Feminist Version of David and Goliath?" *Fletcher Forum on World Affairs* 13 (1993), 13–32.
[42] Sylvester, *Feminist International Relations*, p. 255.
[43] Sylvester, *Feminist Theory*, p. 55.
[44] Sylvester, *Feminist International Relations*, p. 255.   [45] Ibid., p. 256.

on board rather than dismissing, finding in the concerns of others borderlands of one's own concerns and fears.[46]

This is not all that different from dynamic objectivity, but it has let go of the dual image of a male/female difference that needs to be balanced. Instead the image is one of human subjects groping for identity, finding themselves constantly on the edge and trying to steady themselves at least temporarily.

Sylvester recommends that students of IR embrace empathetic cooperation in order to create "a different, difference-tolerant IR whose theories embed a range of mestiza consciousnesses and owlish sweeps of vision."[47] Such an IR would take on a vast range of issues deemed marginal, open up to voices on the other side of its borders while retaining a foot on this side. The goal, she says, "is not to persuade one side to embrace the other, but to facilitate a process that has each side appreciating that the claims and accounts others present are important to a field of social knowledge."[48]

Sylvester demonstrates her method in various ways. Like Tickner, she provides us with a retelling of a quasi-state-of-nature story that becomes possible when one opens up to borderlands and allows "women" to enter. It is a story by Trinh Minh-ha, who "inserts 'women' into a hypothetical village meeting in an un-named Third World country."[49] One woman continues to bathe her child, another to braid a woman's hair, while the men go on playing a game – all this in a public space in the course of the conduct of politics. The discussion is a display of empathetic cooperation. Nobody ever comes directly to the "heart of the matter" because the understanding is that the heart of the matter is always somewhere else. People postpone, let mature, do not push in a linear direction. At the end, the chief summarizes "what everybody has already felt or grown to feel."[50] The meeting brings together mobile subjectivities that allow themselves to be homeless in the course of negotiating. This attitude makes possible communication across difference, across both commensurable and incommensurable subject positions.[51]

Empirically, Sylvester illustrates practices of empathetic cooperation in her studies of the Greenham Common peace camp and of women's cooperatives in Zimbabwe. The banter between women activists protesting the deployment of cruise missiles at a US air force base and soldiers stationed inside the fence made it possible for "defenses" to come down, revealing common scripts. Similarly, the encounter of EU development

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[46] Ibid., p. 247.   [47] Sylvester, *Feminist Theory*, p. 212.
[48] Sylvester, *Feminist International Relations*, p. 264.   [49] Ibid., p. 251.
[50] Sylvester, *Feminist Theory*, p. 97, citing Minh-ha.   [51] Ibid., p. 98.

experts in Zimbabwe, who suspected that funding would be used for purposes other than the ones planned, and cooperative members, who had their own priorities but played along with the project game, displayed elements of empathetic cooperation in which both opened up to an understanding of the other's needs. Boundaries were breached and identities shifted to enable the performance of the development project.

Beyond the method of empathetic cooperation, Sylvester's figuration of the human as fragmented and mobile enables an attitude where fragments of the other become visible and come to light. This is illustrated, for example, in her discussion of Hans Morgenthau, which leads her to attack the certainty that to begin with there is a nature of Man and that this nature produces a particular social order. An IR based on such a presumption cannot possibly provide space for "women." But she also undermines an image of Morgenthau as a prototypically "male" knower, interpreting him as seeking to establish a standpoint epistemology that validates the powers of self-recognition of the statesman. She also acknowledges Morgenthau's refusal to demarcate a space of public morality separate from the private sphere. Yet, she cautions that the realist effort to keep the statesman autonomous from other situated knowers risks the development of "insular arrogance." Lurking at the margins is the other who needs to be feared for potentially entrapping the statesman.[52]

Empirically, Sylvester traces these others, for example, in the Kennedy White House, where they resemble, she suggests, the different categories of women in Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale.* They appear as the presidents' wives and as seducing jezebels, as "women" in foreign policy circles lacking credibility, but most pervasively perhaps as handmaids who, such as Kennedy's secretary Evelyn Lincoln, inadvertently pop up in odd transcripts or press references. Their work is central to the continuation of politics but – like the feminine in Lacanian theory – they are abjected from history, deprived of a voice and agency.

Sylvester thus leaves us with an enlarged IR, an IR attentive to those in the borderlands, an IR that validates types of interactions in which feminine subjects inject themselves into hegemonic discourses, an IR in which the feminine absence prefigured in Lacanian theory is turned into a tenuous feminine presence. "Women" surface in odd places confusing the international relations of Man, the state, and war. Yet while "women" are made visible in this methodology, "men" remain strangely absent, implicitly disembodied, operating in the background to generate abstract logics into which embodied "women" are inserted. Sylvester never quite tells us whether the mobile subjectivities she conjures up are by necessity a

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[52] Sylvester, *Feminist Theory*, pp. 74–7.

substitute for Woman only. Has Man retained his stability in the face of mobile femininity? Does phallogocentrism stand strong? Or does postmodernity collapse Man and Woman into equally mobile subjectivities prefiguring the end of gender and with it the end of phallogocentric orders? The latter would be a remarkably optimistic announcement of an end of gendered history, one I am not sure Sylvester would sign up to.

The focus on "women" and empathetic cooperation enables Sylvester to write against phallogocentrism, against the Cold War "steel-gated IR" that just began to open up to interventions from the margins at the time of her early writings.[53] But it does not provide her the tools to dissect continued masculine rule together with the gendered rules of the state, governmentality, and symbolic orders that prop up such rule. Starting from the problem of identity, the social processes enabling a persistence of masculine domination, the reproduction of varied gender regimes localized and connected in a globalizing world, and the pervasive contestations of such regimes by multiple social forces – including both feminists and various shades of fundamentalists – fade into the background.

Like Tickner, Sylvester recognizes that "women" operate not just as individuals, but are everywhere in the social world of international affairs. Unlike Tickner, she easily moves her matrix of interpretation into the realms of political economy and security. But while the starting point of "women" brings into view the masculinity of these sites, Sylvester stops short of illustrating the mechanisms that reproduce international relations as masculine at different analytical levels. The interpretive matrix of homeless "women" allows her to prepare an intellectual space for developing feminist insights, but yields no feminist theory of the international, a reconstructive exercise precluded by Sylvester's postmodern feminist attitude.

Conclusion

So what if Man had a body? Discussing the early works of Tickner and Sylvester has allowed me to unravel the implications of a de-masculinization of Man in IR. The two authors approach the topic from significantly different perspectives though with overlapping implications for the study and conduct of international relations. Both take psychological and psychoanalytical theories as a point of reference and in both instances these theories are sociologically informed. Thus, for both gender is a matter of social construction, for Tickner in terms of the

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[53] Sylvester used this expression in an email exchange with the author.

formation of individual identities, for Sylvester in terms of the way mobile identities situate themselves in a fragmented world. For both, the subject cannot be confined to an originary consciousness or rationality – it spills beyond the boundaries of the self.

The differences between the two authors are located in their figurations of the human. Object relations theory leads Tickner to postulate a binary of male and female; but with Keller she sets this binary in motion cautioning against theorizing static identities and advocating dynamic autonomy as a way of being and dynamic objectivity as a way of knowing. Her goal is to advocate ways of being and knowing that valorize both feminine and masculine aptitudes and inclinations.

In contrast, Sylvester develops her figuration of "women" by negotiating a seemingly impossible middle ground between Kristeva's denial that there are "women" and Irigaray's grappling for an authentic feminine voice. She is helped by the more sociological adaptations of Lacanian psychoanalytical theory in the writings of Anglo-Saxon feminists, which lead her to develop a figure of postmodern subjectivity that is fragmented, de-centered, mobile, and multiple. Going beyond injunctions for a dynamism suspended between feminine and masculine values, Sylvester's "women" find themselves in the face of many potential homesteads, none of them entirely comfortable or permanent, invited or condemned to situate themselves temporarily in order to move on again swiftly.

Both authors argue the need to bring into IR marginalized voices, but they do so from different perspectives. For Tickner this is a matter of validating the standpoints of differently positioned women who become audible as the figure of Man in IR is shown up to be masculine. For Sylvester these voices are always already there, bursting out of the crevices of the fortress of IR to disturb and produce dissonance. Thus, for Sylvester embodying Man in IR amounts to dissolving the bodily coherence of "women" into subject positions struggling to hold on to a particular constellation of identity. In both instances the figure of Man has been thrown from its pedestal – dynamically masculinized and feminized in Tickner, haunted by homeless "women" in Sylvester's borderlands.

Starting from psychoanalytical theories and gender identity has opened the view for new realities and enabled new epistemological positions. But, as I have argued in this chapter, it also has had limiting effects. Tickner's anthropo-centrism prevents her from extending her analysis of embodied gendered subjects to constructions of gender at levels of analysis beyond Man and Woman. Thus, in her treatment of International Political Economy she needs to abandon Keller's reformulation of what it means to be a gendered human being and resort to a different tool kit. For Sylvester, embodying Man amounts to a discovery of "women" in

dispersed sites and multiple forms but also to a forgetting (or perhaps refusal) to take on masculinity and masculine rule. This shows in her tendency to take hegemonic masculinities and the symbolic order they have constituted as relatively static background conditions. The edifices of masculine rule become objects in which to intervene; masculine gendered subjectivities and their complicity with patriarchal rationalities remain unremarked.

Many feminist IR scholars (including Tickner and Sylvester) have pushed beyond the International Political Anthropology underlying feminist psychoanalytic approaches to locate gender in the discourses and social processes that define international relations. For example, they have shown how international organizations and foreign policy practices reproduce gender regimes and maintain in place power relations both within and between states.[54] In addition, research on constructions of masculinity and narratives of protection has produced important insight on how war becomes possible; gender in these understandings operates as a structuring force beyond subjective agency.[55]

On the other hand, feminist epistemology remains caught up in problematizing the individual knower to a remarkable degree. But Brooke Ackerly and Jacqui True have argued that the methodological emphasis on reflexivity, i.e. a sensitivity to the researcher's own positionality and to existing relationships of power, may be the crucial contribution feminists have made to the study of international relations.[56] Going beyond individual reflection they demand conscious attention to the collectivity of knowledge production and in particular the practical knowledge emerging from concrete social struggles. The challenge that Ackerly and True signal for feminist epistemology is to move reflexivity beyond an anchoring in particular standpoints and homesteads to an embedding of embodied subjectivities in practice-oriented networks of knowers. They have

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[54] For example, Katherine Moon, *Sex among Allies: Military Prostitution in US-Korea Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997); Kate Bedford, *Developing Partnerships: Gender, Sexuality, and the Reformed World Bank* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009); Cynthia Weber, *Simulating Sovereignty: Intervention, the State and Symbolic Exchange* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

[55] For example, Cynthia Enloe, "Margins, Silences, and Bottom Rungs: How to Overcome the Underestimation of Power in the Study of International Relations," in Cynthia Enloe, *The Curious Feminist* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), pp. 19–42; Iris Marion Young, "The Logic of Masculinist Protection: Reflections on the Current Security State," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 29/1 (2003), 1–25.

[56] Brooke A. Ackerly and Jacqui True, "Studying the Struggles and Wishes of the Age: Feminist Theoretical Methodology and Feminist Theoretical Methods," in Brooke A. Ackerly, Maria Stern, and Jacqui True (eds.), *Feminist Methodologies for International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 142–260.

thus begun to suggest approaches to embodied knowing that leave behind the psychoanalytic beginnings of feminist IR.

In sum, embodying Man, the doer and knower, means much more than purging him of biases or creating Woman his equal. It also may mean more than unveiling gendered balancing acts or revealing that sometimes he is propped up by "women." Embodying Man may entail unraveling him, moving beyond individual agency and identity to a post-anthropological theorization of gender as generative at all levels and as structuring the world we call international. It may amount to replacing Man the knower with ways of knowing collectively, reflexively, and inclusive of others. Embodying Man may thus add up to seeing a new world of international relations and to knowing this world like never before.